ROBERTS VAUX AND HIS ASSOCIATES IN THE PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Joseph J. McCadden
Hunter College

If Pennsylvania were given to honoring all of its departed citizens who have been among its greatest benefactors, it would this month pay tribute to the memory of Roberts Vaux, who was born in Philadelphia 150 years ago, on January 21, 1786, and died in the same city just 100 years ago, on January 7, 1836, Vaux, a devout Quaker, was extraordinarily disinterested and self-effacing in his good works. Neither his Quakerism, however, nor his good works have availed to prevent posterity from practically forgetting, in the century that has elapsed since his death, the really notable contributions which he made to such causes as Negro and Indian welfare, prison reform, the care of the sick and the handicapped, temperance, the spread of culture, and common school education.

To be sure, there remain to this day many monuments which attest to Vaux's labors: the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Apprentices Library Company of Philadelphia, the Friends' Asylum at Frankford, the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Pennsylvania 

1 Vaux's contributions to education and other worthwhile causes are detailed in Joseph J. McCadden, Education in Pennsylvania and Its Debt to Roberts Vaux, (in press).
Institution for the Instruction of the Blind. All of these he helped to found and conduct during their early years, as well as the Philadelphia public school system, of which he was not only the principal founder, but also the active and efficient president for the first fourteen years of its existence. Other organizations through which Vaux exercised his influence for social betterment have long since vanished, leaving only a casual memory, although the beneficent effects of their labors are woven inextricably into the pattern of Pennsylvania's life and history. Most far-reaching effective among these short-lived vehicles of Vaux's zeal for improving the condition of Pennsylvania's citizenry was the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools.

The important part played by this society in bringing about the adoption of a state-wide, tax-supported, common school system in Pennsylvania has been freely conceded; its purpose and methods have been outlined by several historians; but the actual composition of the society has remained something of an unsolved question. It will be the aim of the present study to depict certain salient facts about the group of men who coöperated under the leadership of Roberts Vaux in the intensive work of propaganda carried on by the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools from 1827 to 1831.

James Pyle Wickersham, the standard historian of education in Pennsylvania, has shown how the society stirred up an interest in education throughout the state and forced the hands of the legislators by preparing and publishing reports on educational conditions in Pennsylvania, proposing specific reforms, carrying on a wide correspondence with public leaders in other sections of the Commonwealth, instigating the holding of meetings of friends of general education, circulating for signature memorials in favor of a school law, and sending petitions directly to the state Senate and House of Representatives. Wickerson declares that "it is only doing simple justice to say that these big-hearted, broad-minded, self-sacrificing private citizens were the power that moved and steadied the hands of Governor Wolf in his educational policy, and that sent Senator Breck to the legislature determined to press

\footnote{A History of Education in Pennsylvania (Lancaster, Pa., 1885), pp. 296-300; also "The Fight for Free Schools in Pennsylvania," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIX (June, 1891), pp. 497-509.}
to an issue the long-pending contest for free schools.”

However, beyond naming Roberts Vaux and a few of the other more distinguished officers, Wickersham does not tell who these public-spirited citizens were, although he does state that they were “many of the same gentlemen” who had been members of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy in the previous decade. 

Professor Cubberley, who also ascribes to the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools “a leading part in the final success of the free-school movement in Pennsylvania,” describes this vigorous propaganda organization simply as a “branch” of the earlier Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy, and offers no further identification of its members.

The identity and character of the colleagues of Roberts Vaux in the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools is made doubly interesting by the fact that the society accomplished its work almost entirely through man power. Its financial resources were of the skimpiest. It had no funds, no property, and no receipts except the annual membership dues of two dollars, which were not always paid. During its first year, it collected only $150. A small manuscript notebook among the Vaux Papers, bearing the legend, “Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools’ list of Contributing Members, 1830-31,” gives only sixty-seven names for those years. The comparative insignificance of the society’s income makes its achievements all the more remarkable; for its whole task of arousing the state to a consciousness of the need for a public school system and impelling the legislature to make provision for such a system was accomplished by the voluntary, disinterested efforts of the group of men who, under the chairmanship of Vaux, planned and executed one of the most effective and beneficent pieces of propaganda in the history of Pennsylvania.

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4 Ibid., p. 499.
5 E. P. Cubberley, Readings in Public Education in the United States (Boston, 1934), p. 155.
7 Hazard’s Register of Pennsylvania, III (January 24, 1829), p. 53, an article signed “Hamilton” (Mathew Carey), listing Philadelphia’s institutions for the promotion of education.
In determining the composition of the society, there have always been available the names of the officers and council elected annually by the society, for these names appeared in the public press of the time and were appended to some of the pamphlets which the society distributed widely throughout Pennsylvania. The present inquiry has found useful a much-frayed printed copy of the constitution of the society—consisting of the preamble and eight articles—to which are appended the signatures of ninety persons, many of them marked "Paid" or "Paid $2," and which is probably the actual document which persons were required to sign in order to become contributing members of the society.\(^8\) The author of this study has consulted also the manuscript Minutes of the Council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools,\(^9\) a volume that reveals very clearly which men did most of the actual work of the society. These sources, supplemented by a lengthy search among varied other documents in diverse places, make it possible to learn the nature of the group of associates who coöperated actively in the undertakings of the society.

The records show that the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools originated in August, 1827, at a meeting of a few gentlemen held in the home of Roberts Vaux.\(^10\) Here a plan, as proposed by George Washington Smith, was agreed upon. A formal organization meeting took place in October, with election of officers and the adoption of a constitution.\(^11\) Article III of the constitution provided that the officers of the society should consist of "a President, two Vice Presidents, two corresponding Secretaries, a Recording Secretary, a Treasurer, and fifteen members, who, in addition to the preceding officers shall compose the Council," and By-law VI called for stated monthly meetings of this council, which was enjoined "to superintend the correspondence of the Society, to appoint Committees from their own body, or from the Society at large to promote the objects of its institution; to devise the best means of accomplishing these objects, and to execute such other duties as may from time [sic] be committed to it

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\(^8\) Preserved among the Vaux Papers, (Historical Society of Pennsylvania).
\(^9\) Preserved at the home of Mr. Daniel Buckley, great-grandson of Roberts Vaux, "Woodrow," Blue Bell, Pa.
\(^11\) Ibid.
ROBERTS VVAUX AND HIS ASSOCIATES by the Society.” Actually, the Minutes of the Council show that the committees were all chosen from the council members, who did the active work of the society. The official accounts of the semiannual meetings of the society itself, which appeared in the newspapers of the day, show that the organization as a whole did little beyond hearing and approving the report of the council and electing officers.

It is to the council, then, that we must turn to find out who deserved credit for the achievements of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools. As constituted in 1827, when the society was organized, the council consisted of Roberts Vaux, president; John Sergeant and John Wurts, vice presidents; George Washington Smith and George McDowell Stroud, corresponding secretaries; William B. Davidson, treasurer; Augustus Henry Richards, recording secretary; and James A. Mahany, John S. Henry, Mathew Carey, Thomas Earp, George Washington Toland, Peter Hay, Ellis H. Yarnall, Gerard Ralston, George McLeod, Edward Bettle, Joseph P. Grant, Benjamin Wood Richards, Jacob Lex, Weston C. Donaldson and Robert Earp. Robert Ralston, who had been elected a vice president by the society, had declined, and the council had chosen in his place John Wurts. John S. Henry resigned his place on the council almost immediately after the election, and his place was taken by John A. Leamy. In the latter part of 1828, George W. Taylor was elected to fill the vacancy caused by the death of James A. Mahany. A similar vacancy, due to the decease of Ellis H. Yarnall, was filled by the selection of Walter Rogers Johnson in September, 1829.

After the society’s meeting and election of October 5, 1829, we find several changes in the council. Vaux was still president, and Sergeant, Wurts, Stroud and A. H. Richards held their former places as officers, but Smith and Davidson were now simply members of the council, and their posts as corresponding secretary and treasurer, respectively, were now held by Toland and Grant. Furthermore, the names of Hay, the two Earps, Leamy and Donaldson had disappeared from the council, and in their stead were

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22 The “List of Members of the Council,” the “Constitution,” and the “Bye Laws” are given in the front of the manuscript Minutes of the Council.

23 Minutes of the Council, October 20, 1827.

24 Ibid., November 1, 1827.

25 Ibid., meeting of November, 1828, exact date not given.

26 Ibid., September 3, 1829.
Dr. G. Emerson, Samuel Norris, James R. Eckard, Charles Yarnall and Job Roberts Tyson. Dr. Emerson found it inconvenient to serve, and George Mifflin Wharton became a member in his place. On October 11, 1830, Dr. Caspar Morris was added to the council as a substitute for G. W. Taylor. This completes the roster of men who were affiliated, for all or part of its life, with the council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools.

Of the officers of the society, only John Sergeant, who needs no introduction to Pennsylvania readers, appears to have lent merely the prestige of his name to the organization. He alone failed to attend any of the monthly meetings of the council, as a scrutiny of the Minutes will reveal. Roberts Vaux was an active officer. He presided at almost seventy-five per cent of the meetings of the council, and at all the meetings of the society. The other officers, exclusive of Sergeant, also took their duties seriously, attending the council meetings and serving on committees. Likewise, all those who accepted positions on the council were present at the meetings of that body at least occasionally, although a few of them, like Peter Hay and John A. Leamy, were decidedly irregular in their attendance. We may say, then, that the work of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools was carried on by about twenty-nine men who at various times served as officers and members of the council, with a smaller group, comprising Vaux, Smith, Stroud, Toland, Gerard Ralston, A. H. Richards, Davidson, and, after 1829, Eckard and Johnson, apparently doing the lion's share.

Knowing the active personnel of the society, we may now inquire into its relationship, if any, with the earlier Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy, which was organized in 1817 for the purpose of relieving and preventing the recurrence of the distress suffered by the poor of Philadelphia during the winter of 1816-17, and which, through its committee on public schools, proposed and brought about the passage of the School Law of 1818 for Philadelphia. This Public Economy Society began with the formation, on February 17, 1817, of a committee of superintendence, which had William Tilghman as chairman, Roberts

17 Hazard's Register, IV (October 17, 1829), p. 252. The minutes of the meeting of October 5, 1829, are given here.
18 Minutes of the Council, December 3, 1829, and January 7, 1830.
19 Hazard's Register, VI (October 23, 1830), p. 265.
Vaux as secretary, and ten other members. As a result of this committee’s report on the causes and cures of the misery of the poor, the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy was organized on May 6, 1817, to continue on a more permanent basis, the work of the committee. On May 26, its regular officers, three counsellors, and nine standing committees were selected. These committees, which contained from three to nineteen members each, give a good picture of the general composition of the society, and show that many of the most substantial citizens of Philadelphia participated in its labors. Vaux was chairman of the twelve men who constituted the committee on public schools, unquestionably the most far-reaching effective of the groups into which the society was sub-divided.

We find that Vaux was the only member of the original committee of superintendence, and of the entire assemblage of officers and committee members of the Public Economy Society, who was also on the active council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools. Moreover, among the ninety signers of the constitution of the latter society, who probably constituted its contributing membership, there were only seven who could be definitely identified as having belonged to the Public Economy Society, and only two or three—Roberts Vaux, Thomas F. Leaming, and possibly Joseph R. Paxson—who were on that society’s now famous Committee on Public Schools. Hence Roberts Vaux, who was prominent in both societies, was the outstanding link between them.

It is possible, of course, that the personnel of the Society for the Promotion of Public Economy changed considerably during the decade between its origin and that of the Society for the Promotion of Public Schools. Certainly, the earlier society was still in existence in 1825, when it was authorized by law to pay the expenses of commissioners appointed to investi-
gate pauperism in Philadelphia, and in 1829, when it was listed as giving a loan of $3,000 to the House of Refuge of Philadelphia. Its days of achievements, worthy of the memory of history had, however, ceased with the passage of the School Law of 1818, and its later composition and activities are obscure.

The Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, we may safely say, took little beyond its leader, Roberts Vaux, a similarity in title, and a precedent for its method of organizing and setting about its tasks, from the Society for the Promotion of Public Economy of 1817-18. Who, then, were the men who worked so diligently and so successfully, in the name of its council, for the establishment of a public school system in Pennsylvania?

An examination of the sometimes meager data available about these men shows that they were a heterogeneous group not stemming directly from any one organization, enterprise, or social or political entity. They differed as to occupation, creed and party affiliations. Yet they were bound by a common tradition of active and entirely disinterested philanthropy, almost all of them being occupied in various other projects for human betterment before or during the period in which they were engaged in the work of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools.

A striking fact about the men who gave the most genuine service in the council of the society is that the majority of them were very young. Of the more active members, Mathew Carey was the dean; he was sixty-seven in 1827, when the society was formed. The president, Roberts Vaux, was forty-one when the society was organized; George M. Stroud, one of the corresponding secretaries, who attended more council meetings than any other member and served on many committees, was thirty-two; John Wurts, the more active of the two vice presidents, was thirty-five; George W. Smith, corresponding secretary, who is credited with having originated the plan of the society, was twenty-seven; George W. Tol-land, also a corresponding secretary and an energetic participant in the activities of the council, was thirty-one; William B. Davidson, treasurer, was twenty-six; Augustus H. Richards, recording secretary, who was second only to Stroud in the number of council

22 Pennsylvania Session Laws, 1824-25, p. 79.
24 The biographical data on this and succeeding pages are drawn from a variety of sources.
meetings which he attended, was twenty-four; and his brother, Benjamin W. Richards, who atoned for a less regular attendance by a vigorous participation in the affairs of the society, was barely thirty at the time the organization was established. Edward Bettle was not yet twenty-five. Of those who were elected to the council in 1829 or 1830, we find that Walter R. Johnson was thirty-five when he joined the council, and that James R. Eckard, Job R. Tyson, George M. Wharton, and Caspar Morris were all twenty-five or less. Obviously, few of these men could possibly have had any connection with the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy of 1817-18, except through their fathers.

The comparative youthfulness of the members of the council is less remarkable in view of the fact that this was an age when many lads graduated from college in their teens, and were serving in the state legislature in their twenties, an age when ship captains of twenty-one were not to be marvelled at. But the courage and optimism and energy with which this band of Philadelphians set out to make an entire state education-conscious was characteristic of the young in any era, or of the eternally youthful, like Roberts Vaux and Mathew Carey, who, with a high seriousness of purpose, never lose faith in the possibility of improving human conditions.

In factors other than age, the members of the council showed a wide range of difference. Several shades of religious opinion were represented: Roberts Vaux and Edward Bettle were prominent in Quaker activities, Mathew Carey was a leading Roman Catholic, James R. Eckard was destined to become a Presbyterian missionary, Dr. Morris helped to found the Episcopal Hospital and the Philadelphia Institute. The latter was a religious and educational organization for young men “calculated to make them better acquainted with their duty towards God, and render them more useful members of society.” It numbered among its benefactors in 1831, Mathew Carey, Thomas and Robert Earp, Jacob Lex and William B. Davidson.25

On political questions, the members of the council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools also differed drastically. John Sergeant, the absentee vice president,

became a leading Whig, running for vice president of the United States on the ticket of that party in 1832. Roberts Vaux, while declining to run for any major political office, was a Jackson man, a staunch Democrat and a bitter opponent of the so-called "Bank Party." Benjamin W. Richards and George M. Wharton were also Democrats, while Mathew Carey, George W. Toland, Weston C. Donaldson and others on the council were ardently anti-Jackson or Whig. It is possible that these political disagreements, which later grew so venomous as to cause the ousting of Roberts Vaux in 1834, by the partisans of the United States Bank, from positions of honor in several of the institutions he had helped to found, contributed to the distintegration of the Public Schools Society at the close of 1831, although there is no evidence in the business-like Minutes of the Council that political animosities ever interfered with the work of that body during the four years of its existence.

In the occupation of the members of the council we also find a wide variation. The most popular profession among them was the legal one. The lawyers on the council included John Wurts, George M. Stroud, Augustus H. Richards, John Sergeant, Job R. Tyson, George M. Wharton and probably William B. Davidson. George W. Smith and James R. Eckard had been admitted to the bar, but did not practice. There were also many merchants, such as Thomas Earp, who had a hardware store; Robert Earp, who later amassed a fortune as a founder and president of the Lehigh Crane Iron Works; Benjamin W. Richards, who came to be known as the last "merchant mayor" of Philadelphia; also Gerard Ralston, George W. Toland, and probably George McLeod. Dr. Caspar Morris seems to have been the only representative of the medical profession on the council. Mathew Carey had made his fortune in the publishing business. Roberts Vaux and George Washington Smith typified the cultured leisure class. Scoring the pursuit of further wealth, they spent their time in promoting benevolent and intellectual interests.

Walter R. Johnson, so far as we know, was the only teacher who contributed actively to the work of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools. When he joined the council, he was principal of the high school of the Franklin Institute. He was teaching in that school, and was acting as professor of mechan-
ics and natural philosophy at the Franklin Institute, establishing for himself a reputation as a scientist. It is significant of the status of the rank and file of teachers at that period that only one of them, and he a man of high standing and promise in the profession, should be found sharing in the labors of a society whose avowed task was the promotion of public schools.

Whereas a few of the members of the council had attained to eminence at the time the society was formed, most of them, as might be expected from their ages, had their careers still before them. Roberts Vaux had been active as a promoter and an organizer of socially helpful institutions for over twenty years. In 1825, Mathew, Carey had rejected him as secretary of a meeting on internal improvements, explaining his action in his diary on the ground that some gentlemen had "suggested that the name of Roberts Vaux was too cheap by being too often before the public." John Sergeant had been in politics for about twenty years, and was a member of the United States Congress during the first two years of the society's life. John Wurts had already won fame in the Pennsylvania legislature, where, on March 1, 1822, as chairman of the standing committee on education in the Senate, he had made a report which had stamped him as an outstanding friend of public education. For the four year period roughly concurrent with the life of the society, Wurts was United States district attorney. Mathew Carey had retired from active headship in his famous publishing house three years before the society was organized, after devoting almost forty years to its management. But these four men were the only officers and council members of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools who had attained real distinction by 1827, when that society came into being.

The other, younger members of the council made their chief bids for fame during or after the period of the society's activity. Peter Hay, who had been in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives during the 1825-26 session, served in the Senate from 1826 to 1830, a fact which probably accounts for the rarity of his

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Pennsylvania Senate Journal, 1821-22 (March 1, 1822), pp. 476-96.
appearances at council meetings; he later became an alderman, and lived to a good old age. Benjamin W. Richards, the merchant, served in the House of Representatives, 1827-28, and was mayor of Philadelphia during 1829 and from 1830 to 1832. George M. Stroud, corresponding secretary, had to his credit one term in the state legislature, 1824-25, and was chosen in 1835 to be judge of the district court of Philadelphia, a post which he held for thirty-four years. Stroud's colleague as corresponding secretary, George W. Smith, was destined to make something of a reputation for himself as a writer and an archaeologist. George W. Toland served in both houses of the state legislature after the death of the society, and in the United States Congress from 1837 to 1843. Samuel Morris became president of the common council of Philadelphia in 1842. Job R. Tyson was later to serve on the city council and in the state and United States legislatures. George M. Wharton became in 1840 the third president of the Philadelphia school system, succeeding Roberts Vaux and Thomas Dunlap in that post. Dr. Caspar Morris, when he joined the council, was on the threshold of a worthy medical career. James R. Eckard, whom the council had sent to Harrisburg as a lobbyist to exert pressure on the legislators of the 1830-31 session in favor of a general education law, entered Princeton Theological Seminary in 1831, was ordained in 1833, spent ten years in the foreign mission field, and then, returning to the United States, became famous as a preacher and an educator. Walter R. Johnson, already prominent as an educator in 1829, was to attain even greater fame in the years to come as a scientist, a teacher and a writer, and, especially, as an authority on American coals.

Thus we see that although only three or four of the council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools were in any way distinguished when that body was conceived and organized, many of them achieved at least a modicum of fame in later years. On the other hand, three of them, Edward Bettle, William B. Davidson and Augustus H. Richards, were cut off by premature death before their promise had had an opportunity to materialize, and the names of two or three of the others have been rescued from complete oblivion only by their connection with

28 Bettle died in 1832, aged 28; Davidson in 1831, aged 30; and A. H. Richards in 1839, aged 36.
the society. In fact, it may safely be said that, with the exception of Sergeant, Carey, and Vaux, the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, in which a group of able and energetic men pooled their efforts, won a more lasting renown and influenced the history of Pennsylvania more vitally than did any of the individual members.

Most members of the council of the society were in truth well aware of the importance of organizing to achieve their higher aims, and the strongest point of similarity among them was their participation in various corporate enterprises for the public welfare. Almost every one of them had helped or was to help in the formation or management of one or more of the intellectual or benevolent societies that were springing up in Philadelphia in that period.

There was, for example, the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, of which Roberts Vaux had become a member in 1807 and secretary in 1810. Members of the council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools who were later affiliated with this organization included George M. Stroud, Thomas Earp, Gerard Ralston and Edward Bettle. There was also the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, which was opened in 1814 in quarters above Mathew Carey's bookstore for the purpose of cultivating a literary taste and providing a reading and meeting room for members and for intellectual visitors to the city. This numbered Roberts Vaux among its founders and officers, and also had on its roster the names of George W. Smith, William B. Davidson and Samuel Norris. The Apprentices' Library Company of Philadelphia, which sought to provide the free use of books to the young workers of the city, had been created in 1820 by Roberts Vaux and a few other young Quakers. From 1823 to 1837, John Sergeant was its titular president, while Vaux, from 1820 to 1834, was its active first vice president. The Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, formed in 1820, largely through the efforts of Roberts Vaux, attracted the services of George W. Toland, Benjamin W. Richards and Edward Bettle.

The Franklin Institute, for the promotion of science and the education of the mechanic classes, claimed George W. Smith as a founder, in 1824, and had Mathew Carey as a vice president, 1824-29, Roberts Vaux as a member of the committee on instruc-
tion, 1827, and Walter R. Johnson, as we have noted, as head of its high school and one of its lecturers. Mathew Carey and Gerard Ralston were leading spirits in the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Internal Improvements, 1825-26. Roberts Vaux and George W. Smith were in 1824 among the seven founders of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which Edward Bettle and Job R. Tyson joined soon after. The House of Refuge, incorporated in 1826 and opened in 1828, was another brain-child of Roberts Vaux and a few of his colleagues; it could boast of John Sergeant as president, and among its founders, managers and benefactors were Dr. Caspar Morris, Thomas Earp, Robert Earp, Edward Bettle, Jacob Lex and other members of the council of the Public Schools Society. The Infant School Societies, begun in Philadelphia the same year as the Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, embraced among their advisors and other supporters Mathew Carey, Roberts Vaux, Benjamin W. Richards, John Sergeant, William Davidson and Robert Earp. In 1833, less than two years after the dissolution of the Public Schools Society, the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind was organized; the name of Roberts Vaux again appeared as a founder, and Dr. Caspar Morris and Benjamin W. Richards were among those interested.

This catalogue of associations and names is only fractional. A complete list of the diverse societies to which the members of the Council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools belonged, of the charitable institutions to which they devoted their money and energy, would cover many pages. But we have, we believe, given enough to indicate that the council members were a race of "founders" and "joiners"; that the service of educational and benevolent organizations was habitual with many of them; and that Roberts Vaux, their president, was outstanding in this type of service. As a matter of fact, Roberts Vaux listed, in his own handwriting, some time before his death, no less than forty-nine associations and institutions with which he was or had been affiliated, exclusive of governmental commissions on which he had served and minor political positions which he had held.29

We may notice, in the above pages, that, while the active work-

29 This list, in the form of two undated MSS., is preserved among the Vaux Papers.
ers for the Public Schools Society were nearly all participants in other socially-minded organizations, there was no other single society which claimed the attention of a large number of them. It is probable that the interest outside of the society that was common to the greatest number of them was the supervision of the Philadelphia public schools.

Roberts Vaux's committee on public schools of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy, 1817-18, was, as we have observed, responsible for the passage of the Philadelphia school law of 1818. Of the school system founded in Philadelphia under this act, Roberts Vaux became the first president, in 1818; and he and seven other members of his committee on public schools were listed as local directors in the First Annual Report of the Controllers of the First School District of Pennsylvania, while he and two other members of his committee appeared on the superior board of controllers of the schools. By 1827, however, Vaux was the only one of these who was still a controller, and only four others of his original committee remained as directors. Of these four, none except Thomas F. Leaming joined with Vaux in signing the constitution of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools in 1827, and he became merely a contributing member without a share in the work of the council.

However, the boards of directors and controllers of the Philadelphia public schools, as constituted in 1827 and the immediately succeeding years, did contribute many important members to the Public Schools Society. Besides Roberts Vaux, who continued as a director for the first section, a member of the board of controllers, and president of the entire system from 1818 until his retirement in December, 1831, the board of controllers in 1827 included George McLeod, who had been on one of the original boards of directors, and Benjamin W. Richards, while George M. Stroud, George W. Toland, Thomas Earp, Jacob Lex and John A. Leamy were directors of the schools in 1827. Furthermore, twenty of the names subscribed to the constitution of the Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, among the Vaux Papers, are found in the lists of controllers and directors for

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32 Ibid.
1827. We may well picture Vaux or Stroud, or one of the other men who were vitally interested in the prospects of the society, passing the constitution around at the directors' meetings for signatures.

Of the men added to the council after 1827, at least three—Job R. Tyson, James R. Eckard and George M. Wharton—were also directors of the Philadelphia schools.\textsuperscript{3} This gives a total of eleven members of the council who were also on the school boards for Philadelphia during the years in which the council was functioning. Roberts Vaux, who was a founder both of the Philadelphia school system and of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, and who presided over the schools for fourteen years and over the society for the last four of those years, was the strongest link between the two, although decidedly not the only link. It was but natural that, when the council of the society decided to utilize the Philadelphia Model School to train teachers for other sections of the state, it chose Vaux to be in charge of both the training and the supplying of teachers.\textsuperscript{34} It was also natural that, with so strong an admixture of members who were actually engaged in managing the Philadelphia public schools or in private educational ventures, the council should proceed intelligently and effectively with its task of rousing Pennsylvania to demand better legislative provision for statewide education.

Constituted as it was of a number of young men just setting out on their life work, with a leaven of a few older, more experienced heads, of men widely separated by their political and religious views and their modes of making a livelihood, but united by their common interest in organized philanthropies and in the spread of learning, the council of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools functioned with apparent unanimity of purpose for four years. Its surveys of education in Pennsylvania were quoted as authoritative in the highest governmental circles,\textsuperscript{35} its memorials were signed by thousands

\textsuperscript{34} Minutes of the Council, November, 1828; December 7, 1828; January 1, 1829; February 5, 1829.
before being forwarded to the legislature, schools were formed in several remote parts of the state as a result of its efforts, and, before it disintegrated, the law of April, 1831, establishing a state-wide general education fund, was placed on the statute books of Pennsylvania.

To Roberts Vaux, veteran founder, organizer, and officer of many philanthropic and educational societies and institutions, must go much of the credit for bringing and holding together the heterogeneously constituted and yet highly effective Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, of which he was both an originator and the faithful president.

26 Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser, March 27, 1830, “Public Education,” a reprint of the minutes and the report of the council for the society’s meeting of March 22, 1830.